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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 7210
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2771
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 8875
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 4781
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 3469
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PK](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#)
SUBJECT: ELECTION COMMISSION TAKES SOME POSITIVE,
LAST-MINUTE STEPS

REF: ISLAMABAD 398

11. (U) Summary: Pakistan's Election Commission (ECP) decided February 7 to require the certification of polling results to party agents and to set a new date for elections in four constituencies because of the death of candidates, including PPP's Benazir Bhutto. With the assistance of USG-supported IFES, the ECP also launched its on-line complaints process and published the list of polling stations. End summary.

12. (U) The ECP announced February 7 that the presiding officer in each constituency should give a certified copy of the statement of the count and the ballot paper count to candidates' agents at polling stations. This would occur directly after polling and the count. ECP Secretary Kanwar Dilshad stated that this step was being taken to eliminate the possibility of "ghost polling stations."

13. (SBU) On February 4, the ECP released hardcopy the list of 64,176 polling stations across the country along with their respective number of voters. Dilshad noted that copies were available at the offices of returning officers, district returning officers, provincial election commissioners and the ECP Secretariat. USG-supported IFES reported to EmbOff that this list should also be on the ECP's website by February 11.

14. (U) The ECP also announced February 7 that the elections for two National Assembly constituencies would be deferred until the second week of April because of the death of one of the candidates. This number includes the Larkana constituency of former Pakistan People's Party leader Benazir Bhutto. The schedule for nominations, scrutiny and the election date is supposed to be announced immediately after the new members of the National Assembly are sworn in. These elections will coincide with by-elections to fill seats vacated by candidates winning multiple constituencies. Candidates should have about 48 days for campaigning.

15. (U) So far, the ECP has registered 1,654 election-/campaign-related complaints. The entire list has been placed on the ECP's website, with the assistance of USG-supported IFES. The largest number of complaints registered concern polling stations, but complaints range from actions of civil servants to violations of the code of conduct to examples of violence.

16. (SBU) Comment: These steps taken by the ECP are late, but welcome. These are measures which the Embassy has pushed for

months and on which our grantee, IFES, has labored extensively. The move to postpone elections where candidates have died responds directly to a PPP request. End comment.

PATTERSON